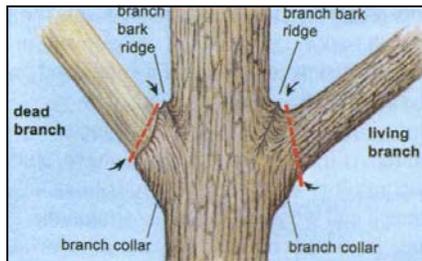


Tree Tips

Pruning – The appropriate time to prune depends on the type of plant, its condition, and the results desired. Light pruning can be done at any time of the year. Unwanted growth is most easily removed while it is small, and early removal will have less of a dwarfing effect. Broken, dead, weak, or heavily shaded branches can be trimmed with little or no effect on a plant, no matter what the timing. Most deciduous plants can be pruned any time during the dormant period between leaf-fall and spring growth. Some of the most common plants which should be pruned in late winter include green ash, willow, oak, and fruit trees such as apple, plum, chokecherry, hawthorn, mountain ash, and crabapple. Winter pruning results in a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring. A note of caution though, newly planted seedlings should not be pruned the year they are planted. Pruning removes leaves that create sugars during photosynthesis. These sugars are critical to proper growth and recovery during the first few years after planting. Small, structural pruning in the first 5-10 years of life will help a tree develop into a strong specimen.



USDA Forest Service

Mold on seedlings – The best way to prevent mold is by proper temperature and moisture control. Check the seedlings. If there is any mold present, look at it carefully. Some molds are saprophytes growing on dead tissue on the surface and don't injure the seedlings. They can be washed off. If the fungus has entered the seedlings, rot will be present, and that is not good. If the seedlings still look adequate, get them outplanted as quickly as possible. Mold is inhibited by acid conditions. Wet shingle tow, which is acidic, will help keep the mold away. If you keep the cooler temperature around 35 degrees, the mold is less apt to grow. So keep an eye on the trees in your cooler, and try to get them planted as quickly as possible.

Root dipping – If tree seedlings are properly stored, handled, and planted, root dips should not be needed. However, root dipping of tree seedlings can be beneficial on sandy sites. There are mixed reports on whether or not root dip is helpful, but it may give some margin of error when handling is not as good as it should be. It is messy for planters to handle. Also, while treating the roots, you should be careful to see that the dip does not get on the tops.

Mike Knudson, Forester

Al Gustafson Receives National Plant Materials Award

Bob Escheman, NRCS National Program Leader for Plant Materials, recently announced Al Gustafson, NRCS Area Resource Conservationist located at Thief River Falls, Minnesota, as the recipient for the **Plant Materials Special Service Award for 2005**. This national award is presented to a non-plant materials person whose efforts have or are substantially advancing the plant materials program. Al has been a consistent promoter of the Plant Materials Program throughout his career and annually provides plant materials assistance to the Bismarck PMC, Minnesota NRCS State Office, Minnesota Area 1 staff, numerous landowners, and others. Two of the largest native seed growers in Minnesota are located in Area 1 and work closely with Al. He is an innovative conservationist and always looking for improvements in the seeding standards and specifications that will result in a better product for the field. Al makes sure that the new area employees know about the Bismarck PMC and how they can provide assistance, as well as receive assistance through the Plant



Al Gustafson (right) leads the tour by a field of white prairie clover at Carlson Prairie Seed Farm.

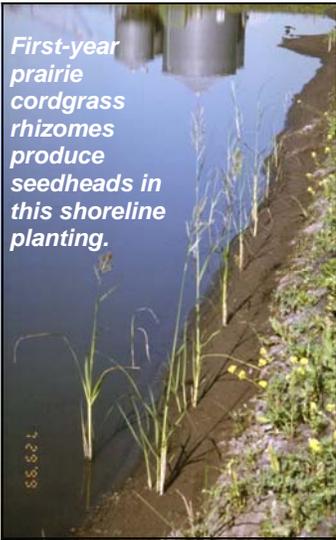
Materials Program. He organizes annual plant materials tours and assists in PMC plant/seed collections and technology development. Al has provided field experience and information to add to the PMC data base regarding species inundation and plant performance on wet sites and saline sites. He has participated in all of the Native Plant Summits co-sponsored by the Bismarck PMC, and promoted the attendance of others from Minnesota. Al continually challenges plant materials staff and stimulates others with his strong interest in the Plant Materials Program. He recognizes its value to the agency, and markets the Plant Materials Program in his daily activities. Congratulations, Al, on this worthy recognition!

Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist



Prairie Cordgrass Rhizomes for Conservation Plantings

If you are doing any riparian, wetland, or any conservation work where prairie cordgrass would be adapted on the site consider planting a few bareroot prairie cordgrass



First-year prairie cordgrass rhizomes produce seedheads in this shoreline planting.

rhizomes. If you are installing any new dams or developing or reclaiming any wetlands, your revegetation efforts would be greatly enhanced by adding a few of the bareroot rhizomes. These rhizomes will provide a quick cover to help protect against soil erosion. Rhizomes of Red River prairie cordgrass are available from some local conservation nurseries. The Bismarck PMC has done a number of demonstration plantings using rhizome material and has had excellent success in establishment.

The bareroot material will generally have good plant growth and quickly spread to provide a protective cover to the soil. These bareroot plants will usually produce viable seed the first year. Both spring and fall dormant plantings have been successful. Prairie cordgrass will not take long periods of inundation so it is recommended that rhizomes be planted approximately 1 to 2 feet above the high water level. A 1 to 2-foot spacing between plants works well for most plantings. The planting can be along the entire site or small clump plantings can be made at various locations along the bank edge. For those of you interested in more information, a plant guide is available from the Bismarck PMC or the plant guide can be downloaded from the PLANTS website at <http://plants.usda.gov>. Try a few Red River prairie cordgrass rhizomes in your conservation plantings this year and see for yourself the advantages the bareroot rhizome material offers.

Wayne Duckwitz, Plant Materials Center Manager



Approximately 50 wetlands were ringed with Red River prairie cordgrass rhizomes at the Robert L. Morgan WMA in east central North Dakota.

Shipment of Field Planting and Special Planting Material

Field Plantings

We would like to remind those field offices and soil and water conservation districts who requested American black currant and/or roundleaf hawthorn for field plantings this spring that we will be notifying each of you by email of the approximate date of shipment. This will ensure that someone is available to receive and care for the material. We are tentatively planning for a shipping time of late April to early May. Twenty-five plants will be sent with each order and should be stored in a tree cooler and planted as soon as possible.

Special Plantings

Sweetgrass and white sage will be sent out in numbers of 10 plants per order. For those of you that have requested this material, it will be shipped around the first of May. You will be notified by email of the shipping date to ensure that someone is available to receive the material. We do not recommend that you place the sweetgrass or white sage, which will be actively growing in a tree cooler. It will keep the best if stored in a cool place and watered until it can be planted.

We will ship out all material at the beginning of the week in hopes that the material will be delivered sometime between Wednesday and Friday. The material should be planted as soon as possible.

If you have any questions on delivery or planting, let us know. We want to do everything possible to ensure that the stock is handled properly. Field plantings are a way the PMC can test plants, under actual field conditions for potential conservation use. Thank you in advance for your time and effort in helping us gather information on the field plantings. The information that you provide us may help document the release of a new conservation plant.

Wayne Duckwitz, Plant Materials Center Manager

Need Seedlings for your SCD Arboretum?

The PMC has some extra 3-foot tall bareroot seedlings available for SCD arboretums. The species are 'Midwest' crabapple and 'McDermant' pear. Contact the PMC if interested. Mike Knudson, Forester

A New Face at the PMC

In early March, Leslie Glass joined the PMC Staff as part-time secretary. Before coming to the PMC, she most recently has worked in the private sector. Prior to that she worked for USDA-APHIS and USDA-RD. When Leslie is not working she enjoys writing, website design, gardening, fishing, camping, horseback riding and trail rides. She is teaching herself to speak Spanish and has recently obtained a TEFL (Teach English as a Foreign Language) certification. In February 2006, she taught her first English class in Guimaca, Honduras, Central America. Welcome, Leslie!